

THREE
LETTERS
TO THE
Young Gentlemen
OF THE
PRESENT AGE.

1. *On the immoderate Use of Women.*
2. *On the prevailing Spirit of Duelling.*
3. *On the eager Pursuit of modish Diversions.*

By J. WILDAIR, Esq;



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LETTERS



TO THE
SECRETARY
OF THE
BRITISH MUSEUM

BY J. W. DAIN, Esq.



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A

LETTER, &c.

GENTLEMEN,

AS I lived with your fore-fathers, and spent great part of my youth in the pursuit of what seems to be the business of your lives, viz: pleasure; I thought I could not employ some of the latter hours of my life better, than in communicating to you, some of those useful hints, I have gathered in a course of between fifty and sixty years.

Your fathers and grandfathers were busied in the same chace, and measured every hour of a short but merry life, by the joys which every fresh moment furnished to their wearied senses. They thought they had found out every secret that could kill time, and make the drudgery of life agreeable; but you, their offspring, have in some measure out-stript
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them, and convinced the world that there are no bounds to be set to invention; that as every age improves in something, so you have far outstripped the last and every preceding century, in the improvement you have made in the science of pleasure. Some of our heavy hours we were obliged to slumber away, for want of an important trifle to supply the vacancy; but you have hit upon a method to find new entertainment for every hour of the twenty-four, without being obliged to have recourse to your pillow, or the painful labour of business, for want of something more agreeable to your thoughtless dispositions. You scorn to be tyed down by the dull divisions of natural time, or governed by the sun in your rising or lying down; you scorn to be beholden to that warm planet for any thing; you scarce deign to eat what owes its growth merely to its genial heat, or is produced by the vicissitudes of its seasons, your stoves and green-houses being to supply you with aliment more palatable; you have inverted the common order of things, breakfast at noon, dine at night, and sup in the morning. The evening, in my youthful days, was the only time we had for mighty pleasure, but you have found out something suitable



able to all hours. You have your morning diversions at *Ranelagh*, &c. your forenoons at *Foot's*, &c. which supply the vacant hours till dinner-time; from that you have the same place of resort for the evening pleasure, or else the opera, the masquerade, ball, and play bring about the hours for the tavern appointment, and all the joys of a midnight holiday: In a word, there is not a vacant moment in a gentleman's time but what is employed to some such valuable purpose. As I have observed this spirit daily increasing, and no one knows how far it may be carried, I am afraid in the hurry of important pleasure, there may be something wanting that might give a higher relish to all other enjoyments which must escape your observation, too much taken up at present to mind every trifling circumstance. What gave me the first hint of this was, my kinsman, *Dick Caperwell*, chanced to send his valet down to my country-house some months ago on an affair he had to transact in my neighbourhood, in which he supposed I could be serviceable: I had known *Dick* from a child, and knew him a brisk forward youth, just such another as his father, who died of a debauch at the rummer tavern about twenty years ago; and judging the

son would follow the good example of so worthy a father, I took occasion to ask his servant, how his master found means to spend his time, since I knew he had not a constitution for drinking, more than his father, and no disposition either for business, reading, or thinking. The fellow, who has more wit than a justice of peace had in my time, replied smartly, that there was not a man in *England* had less idle hours upon his hands than his master, and was sure that if the day was eight and forty hours long, he had ways and means to employ all of them; and then gave me about a week's journal of my friend *Dick's* manner of life; and upon summing up the account, I truly found, that instead of time lying heavy upon his hands, he had really too little for the enjoyment of the numerous pleasures which the times afford, and was obliged to encroach upon the hours commonly allotted for dress, for fear of losing the ravishing delight of *Rane'agh*, and the alluring sight of his mistress in a careless deshabille.

I reflected upon this as a very great hardship, for I consider the moments spent before a dressing-glass to be some of the most entertaining in the whole day, as that presents us with the object
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on earth we most admire, and for whose dear sake, we are willing to suffer the most. How ravishing is it to see one's image reflected from the mirror, full of those killing and attractive charms, which are to set the boxes in a blaze at night, where every line of it speaks contentment, and every feature expresses an inward satisfaction, and high opinion of the much lov'd object. What pleasure can atone for the loss of an hour so agreeably employed as in self-admiration! Our mistresses upon a dozen times seeing become familiar to the imagination, and we can scarce look upon them after enjoyment with a greater emotion than on our grandmother's picture. But let us view our charming selves never so often, let us be never so often familiar with our dear persons, there is still something new to admire, something to raise our curiosity to gaze on without fear of being cloy'd with the frequent survey. We find new charms, new pleasures, new delights every day, and the kind glass not only represents us as we are, but as we really wish ourselves to be when in the highest pitch of self-love.

Therefore, gentlemen, considering how much the new invented morning diversions encroach upon the delightful enter-

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Therefore, gentlemen, considering how much the new invented morning diversions encroach upon the delightful enter-

tainment of the modern fine gentlemen, I have, in order to make your pleasures compleat, invented a new kind of pocket glass, which you may carry about with you to all the gay places you frequent, without the least inconvenience ; which has this advantage above all other glasses, that it shews you not only what you were, what you are, but what you must expect to be; it not only shews the outside, but it gives you a clear view of your internal part, and by magick art, as it were, shews you the figure you have made, and are to make in the eye of all mankind, thro' every period of your lives. At first sight you may be apt to suppose the mirror only represents the life and character of *Jack Wildair*, but upon a nearer view, by only shifting a screw or two in the case, you may immediately discover every line and feature of your own sweet selves. This I look upon as a valuable curiosity, and had once a great mind to have presented it to some mighty monarch, who would have rewarded me with titles, honours and riches for the great discovery, but that, I thought too mercenary ; then I had an inclination to have presented it to the royal-society, to be laid up in their collection of rarities, but I considered that would be burying my

my performance from the public ; therefore I at last considered, I could not make a better use of it, than in bestowing it in common among the sons and grandchildren of the old companions of my youth, that as you live now in some measure as I own I did, I may if possible be instrumental in helping you to die as I hope to do.



Memoirs of the Life of JACK
WILDAIR, Esq;

JACK WILDAIR, the subject of the following pages, was born near three-score years ago, his father died before he was twelve years of age, and left him sole heir of an estate of two thousand a year free of all incumbrances, except a jointure of 500 l. a year to his mother, with ten thousand pounds in ready money; the estate well timbered, and most of his leases ready to expire. His mother, a lady of exemplary virtue, and strict piety, was left his guardian, an office which she discharged while she lived, with great care and fidelity, both in regard to the management of the estate,

and the education of this hopeful heir of the family.

Jack was a forward promising boy, and remained at *Eton* school till turned of thirteen, where he had made a pretty progress in the classics, and performed all his exercises with applause : Towards the winter of his thirteenth year, he was taken with an aguish disorder, which obliged the fond mother to send for him home ; he had not been with her above a month, when after proper remedies being apply'd, *Jack* recovered his health as well as ever, but as *Christmas* was then approaching, he delayed returning to school till that season was over. A young gentleman of the neighbourhood about a year and some months older than *Jack*, came to pass a month at the house, in order to keep Mr. *Wildair* company while he staid in the country. This youth was of a strong robust constitution, tall of his age, and had been bred up with all the indulgence of his humours, which he could expect from the capricious fondness of an old grandfather, who had been a rake in his young days, loved the smack of the whip, tho' past the age of action, and took a particular pleasure in indulging every thing in his grand-child which looked like a prognostic of

of his being as good a cock of the game as he had been formerly. The old man loved to talk of his former pranks, and had not prudence enough to restrain his libidinous tongue in the presence of the youth; on the contrary, when he had spent a whole hour in obscene discourse, and in recounting his glorious achievements in wenching, he used to conclude the edifying history with an---ah! young dog, I shall see you one of these days run mad after all the wenches in the parish, and make more mischief than a recruiting officer, or an *East-India* crew just landed from the *Cape-of-good-hope*; those eyes, you rogue, tell me you'll be a cock of the game, if you are not, you are no grand-child of old *Harry's*.

These kind of discourses soon had their desired effect upon Mr. *William*, who before he was quite thirteen found out the secret how he was got, and at the period we are now speaking of, made strong love to all the farmers daughters within ten miles of him, to the great joy and satisfaction of old sir *Harry* his grandfather. *Jack Wildair* had been educated in a quite different manner, he was kept close from the company of servants, and no conver-

fation was carried on in his hearing that bordered in the most distant manner upon any thing that could sully the imagination, or offend the chastest ear, so that in fact, till he had met with *Bill Belamour*, he had scarce any notion of the difference of sexes, and the art of man-planting was as much a secret to him as the philosopher's stone. It is true, as he was just entering on his fourteenth year, and of a healthy tho' not of robust constitution, he was not without his emotions, but was a stranger to the means of allaying them. However, as soon as Mr. *William* became his companion, he was not left long in the dark, as to every thing that could give him ease or hopes of pleasure. They too soon grew fond of one another, and became bedfellows, *Jack* preferring *Bill's* company to that of his tutor, who was easily prevailed on to humour the lads, as he had no suspicion of the consequences, and besides had some business which called him to be absent for a week or two during the holydays. Mr. *William* quickly found out the ignorance and simplicity of his young companion, whom he soon initiated in the w^l edge of the puerile vices, which mightily pleased Mr. *Wildair*, who could scarce refrain next morning from telling his

his mamma, what a pleasing lessons Mr. *Bellamour* had taught him ; however, he was cautioned by his young tutor in iniquity to conceal all such affairs from the women, especially his mamma, who for some old queer maxim of her own would chide him for it. Two or three days past in this manner, and the devil of curiosity seized *Jack*, to be informed what made men and women so fond of each other. Mr. *William* his new oracle soon informed and fired him with a recital of all his amours, and promised to bring him acquainted with a mistress who would give him joys he had never felt. *Jack* thought himself as much a man now as ever his father was, and could not see one of the chamber-maids without being in a blaze, tho' but a week before they might have gone to bed to him without robbing him of a moment's rest. He dream'd of nothing but the charming girl his dear *Bill* was to procure him, and teased him night and day to put his promise in execution.

The other had all the inclination in the world to make good his engagements, but he was obliged to observe some measures, on the account of the old lady *Wildair*, who kept a strict decorum in her family, and also a more than ordinary

watchful eye over the young gentlemen. He had a girl about a mile off, a farmer's daughter, with whom he kept correspondence himself, and her younger sister was the mistress he design'd for *Wildair*, who was a little skittish, and required some management to bring her to his design. The father of the two damfels knew nothing of the honour done him by the young squire, or intended him by the other, but *Bellamour* used to meet her and her sister in a thicket at some distance from the farm-house. It was easy to make an appointment with them by the help of a servant who attended him, and was his chief engineer in those schemes; but as it must be at night, it was difficult for the young gentlemen to get out; however, after a council of war had been called, whereat the footman assisted, it was resolved that an appointment should be made the following night, and that the two gallants should convey themselves out by dropping from the window of their chamber, which was only up one pair of stairs, and looked into the kitchen garden, which had no high wall. The mercury is dispatched, the ladies appointed, and our two young lovers, about the hour of twelve, sallied out of their window into the garden,

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where the footman waited for them to conduct them to the place of rendezvous, which might be about a mile off, tho' no very comfortable road; but omnipotent love conquers all difficulties, and encounters all dangers boldly: They had no lions nor bears to combat, nor enchantments to dispel, nothing but the length of the way to make them uneasy, and a very cold snowy night; though moonlight, they had several times liked to have missed their way, but at last they got sight of the mach wished for thicket, and a glimpse at a distance of the dear damsels, who, true to their appointment like the steel to the dial, had been there some minutes before them, almost frozen with cold, if the warmth of their wishes had not kept them in a thaw. *Bill* spied them first, and nimbly sprung over a small ditch, which lay between them, disdaining to go about by a plank which divided him and his joy; *Jack* disdaining to shew less forwardness than his companion, at an interview which was to dub him from that day forward a man, boldly made a spring to follow him, but poor *Wildair* mistook his mark, and instead of jumping over into the warm arms of his mistress, plunged himself into the middle of the ditch, and stuck almost up to the neck

neck in mud, water, ice, and snow. The hero that swam the *Hellepont* every night to meet his mistress, was in ten times better plight, for he had at least clear water and a temperate climate to grapple with, but poor *Jack* was all over mud and ices, an odd kind of bath to prepare for a love-encounter ! The footman, Mr. *William*, and the damsels all ran to help him out of the disaster, and could not for their life help laughing at the figure he made when he first stepped on dry land, and made an awkward compliment to the ladies, which he could scarce express articulately, with the chattering of his teeth. The youngest girl, *Jack's* design'd-for mistress, was a kind of country wit, and passed some scurvy jokes upon *Wildair's* pickle, which put him quite out of conceit with intrigues, at least for that time. The girls, who were older than our gallants, judg'd a warm fire and some chicken broth would be a properer regimen for Mr. *Jack*, than a maidenhead, therefore the youngest advis'd him to go home and take the recipe, and she and her sister left the field. Mr. *William* was somewhat chagrined at his own disappointment, but smothered it in good manners to his friend, and went home with him.

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They got easy enough into the garden, but how to get up to their chamber, was a difficulty had never occurred at the council of war: They looked up but saw no hopes of getting in, so they were likely to make a night of it where they were, which would have been very inconvenient for poor *Jack*, who was almost frozen with cold, and ready to faint. When they were just on the point of despairing, the footman spy'd one of the gardener's pruning ladders against the wall, brought it and set our young adventurers fairly into their apartments. *Jack* stripped and went to bed, but had not been long there when he was seized with a violent cholic, the house was alarmed, and young hopeful about nine next morning was far advanced in a high fever. A physician was sent for, who in eight or ten days set him to rights, but the secret of the adventure of the bath was kept from my lady, who if she had smelt it would have spoil'd the new commenced intimacy between the young squires.

Jack recovered his former strength in about a fortnight and by that time had forgot the danger and fatigue he had underwent in his first essay, but was resolved once more to make a push at being

being a man, and making a woman. He proposed it to Mr. *William*, who though he loved mischief in his heart, yet had more wit than to run any further risks of that sort with *Jack*, at least he was so engaged in the house, that he did not care to go abroad; for by his stay here, he had picked up an intimacy with the lady's woman, of which (as of all new faces) he was more fond, than of the maid in the thicket, and could come at her without running any further risks. He communicated his happiness to *Jack*, who could not help envying him, but he promised to procure him one of the laundry maids, for hitherto he had not the courage to speak for himself, and he was in this as good as his word; for by the help of my lady's woman, who promoted this the better to conceal her own affair, a young girl about sixteen belonging to the laundry, was sacrificed to Mr. *Jack*; and now the young sparks had caught their mates, and went on swingingly till the tutor returned, who in a day or two discovered the whole affair, and spoiled *Jack's* amours at *Wildair-park* for several years. The good lady was astonished at the scene of iniquity that had been carried on in her house by two such young boys. *Jack* was severely
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ly chastised, Mr. *Billy* sent home to his grandfather, who made a jest of the whole affair, the maids were turned adrift, and poor *Jack* sent again to *Eton* under the watchful eye of his tutor, who never left him for fear of his returning to his new learned pranks. Before I proceed, I must do justice to lady *Wildair*, who, after the gust of her passion was over, privately ordered care to be taken of her hopeful son's mistress, that she might not be left to the mercy of her relations. In a few weeks she understood the young creature was with child, which engaged her still to be more tender of her; she had her boarded at a tenant's house of reputation, where she was delivered, which proved to be a boy; and being recovered, sent her to *York*, where she bestowed liberally upon her education, and by her interest had her married to a substantial farmer's son, to whom she gave with her a portion of 500*l*. She had several motives for this method of proceeding; she knew she was debauched in her house, more for want of experience and the base practice of her woman, and might, if left to her self, continue in vice and wickedness; whereas, by the care she took of her, she had not the plea of necessity to continue abandoned, and was not exposed

posed to the advantages which young rakes take of women whose reputations are once tainted; had time to reflect on the folly of her conduct, and establish herself in the principles of virtue; which really was the case, as she proved to my certain knowledge an affectionate dutiful wife, and a tender mother to several children, whom she lived to see settled in a very reputable way in the country; remembered her disgrace with compunction, her conversion with pleasure, and her kind benefactress with unfeigned respect and gratitude.

The good lady did not confine her charity to the mother only, but extended it to the infant, whom she had, after he was weaned, brought home to her own house, and educated with the same tenderness as if he had been lawfully begotten, and when she died left him three thousand pound to settle him in the world. The father was equally fond of the first fruit of his virility, which had not so good an effect as the pious care of the grandmother, for by the time the youth was sixteen or seventeen years of age, *Jack* was commenced a compleat rake, and had laughed himself out of all notions of decency, religion, or temperance, and initiated his son in all the follies of loose debauchery.

bauchery. It is true, he married him to a woman of fortune, and made a handsome addition to the grandmother's bounty, but even then he encouraged him to make light of the ties of marriage, and never left him, till by excess, riot and dissipation, he broke his constitution, which was but puny, and sent him to his grave before he was thirty. However, he left some children, who happened to grow up when *Jack*, now a grandfather, had got a sight of his folly, and by that means were brought up in different principles, and on whom he has settled the remainder of his estate, for poor *Wildair* never saw any of his issue but this first venture.

But enough of this puerile amour; it is time to proceed to the rest of the important transactions of *Jack's* life. After the discovery of this first intrigue, as I hinted above, *Jack* left *Wildair-park*, and set out with his tutor for *Eton*, with a heavy heart, for tho' hitherto he had always expressed a great regard for his studies and his tutor, yet on this occasion his young mind was so fired with his late amour, and chagrined at those who made the discovery, that he wished books at the devil, and his tutor in *Morocco*; he had a strong inclination to rebel, about which

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his late intimate *Bellamour* had read him some lessons, and promised him the protection of his debauched grandfather, in case he had courage to make an elopement; but *Jack* was not quite so void of grace, he had been accustomed to a blind submission to his tutor, who had nothing of harshness or pædagogue in his temper, and above all had the most unfeigned regard for his mother, whom he could not think of disobliging in any shape; so partly out of virtue, and partly out of necessity, *Jack* put the best face on the matter he could, but still his mistress ran in his head, and disturbed him in the course of his studies. However, that wore off by degrees, and the watchful eye which his tutor kept, hindered him from engaging in any new amour for the year and a half he remained at *Eton*. After that time, he and his tutor removed to *Oxford*, and *Jack* entered on a course of philosophy. When he was turned of sixteen, he felt in himself a strong inclination to the fair sex; but found vast difficulty in indulging it, for his tutor seemed inflexible in permitting him no liberties of that kind, and he was so closely watched, either by himself, or the servant who attended him, that without the knowledge of one of them *Jack* could

could have no relief even there where wenching is so much in fashion, tho' it was not then so openly practised as now, and the students were obliged to manage their intrigues with much more decorum than at present. However, his valet was prevailed upon, after about half a year's entreaty, and by the force of a good sum of money, to have some compassion on *Jack's* wants in that way, and by his means he had now and then an opportunity of perusing a girl in sheets, and putting in practice some experiments in true natural philosophy ; a branch of learning, which of all others suited our young student's talents, but he was obliged to act so cautiously, and opportunities happened so seldom, that he catch'd no harm by overmuch study, for in fact, as he afterwards learned when he came of age, the valet had been seduced by the connivance of the tutor, who had instructed him to ingratiate himself with his young master, and become his confidant, lest he should make application to some other who might lead him quite astray : By this means the tutor was acquainted with every step that was taken, tho' he seemed perfectly ignorant, and allowed things to go no farther than was consistent with decency, at least that kind

kind of decency peculiar to young men of quality or fashion. I cannot say but at this time, I approve of the tutor's conduct, for if he had confined him to absolute celibacy, it is more than ten to one but *Jack*, quite wearied with the preternatural restraint, had broke out into some very gross irregularities, and spoiled his constitution out of spite: For it is absolutely certain, more than half our delight in that kind of dalliance is owing to the restraint which is laid upon it; and in this case the stolen indulgence connived at by the sagacious tutor, had the good effect to hinder our student from wandering beyond the bounds limited, and disturbing his studies in search of other pleasures. I have often heard *Jack* mention his worthy tutor with great love and reverence; he said, tho' a man turned of forty, he was facetious in his humour, yielding, compassionate, and complaisant in his temper, joined in all the innocent diversions of his pupils, on whom he was no further a check than in hindering them from any thing mean or immoral. He made himself their confidant in every thing, and the young fellows of *Jack's* acquaintance were never easy when he was not of their party.

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In this sober manner *Jack* lived for two years at the university, when an accident happened which disturbed his tranquillity, and had almost spoiled the rake. Among the number of his acquaintance, a young gentleman of the city of *Oxford* was his greatest intimate; they visited one another frequently, and this youth was of such a sober sedate demeanour, that the tutor thought him quite safe in his company. He lived with a distant relation of his, a widow Gentlewoman of a very good family, but fortune scarce sufficient to maintain her and her only daughter, then about seventeen years of age. *Jack* was introduced to the family by his companion, and their intimacy was such, that he was soon familiar with the ladies, who lived in great respect, and observed a strict decorum especially towards men, none of whom were admitted to their house but the kinsman and his friend *Mr. Wildair*. Our young student, who had been very little in women's company, and never had an affair of gallantry with any of higher station than a laundress, or such like, felt quickly an extraordinary kindness for the young lady, who was well bred and every way agreeable, with a sufficient share of wit to be admired by a person more knowing
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in the world than our young student. In short, in a month or two he fell deeply in love, but had sagacity enough to perceive that a matrimonial affair with one so much inferior to him in fortune, would not be agreeable to his relations, nor a reputable entry into the world. Tho' he wanted to enjoy her, yet he could not think of paying the price of his liberty, and had some qualms of conscience about seducing a person of her rank and education upon less honourable terms, in case he should be master of rhetoric sufficient to gain her assent, of which the principles of her education, the watchfulness and prudent example of her mother gave him little hope. But these conscientious scruples did not last long; as he dared trust the secret with nobody who would have helped him in this conflict between reason and appetite, he therefore resolved to make a push, and obtain her at least at the expence of a few oaths, a kind of coin, he had heard were very current with young creatures not much versed in the deluding arts of mankind.

He now dropped all his other amours, never once thought of his former mistresses, but bent his whole study how to gain his new charmer. He had abundance of difficulties to encounter, his own tutor,
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his friend, who was interested in the fate of his relation, the watchful mother, were all spies upon him, whom he must first deceive; but a certain awe and reverence, which the virtuous innocence of the young lady inspired him with, was an obstacle greater than all the rest. He began his attacks at a distance, and was silly enough to believe he could sigh and ogle her into his measures; but she was perfectly a stranger to that kind of language, and he courted her with those distant hints for several months without making any visible impression. He then advanced closer, and ventured to squeeze her passionately by the hand, was on all occasions assiduous in pleasing her, and ready to commend every thing she said or did. This was a little more intelligent and better understood; she was at first startled at it, but as weeks passed without any declaration, or alteration of conduct, she ascribed it to good-nature, accident, or any thing, but what it really was; however, it so far fixed her attention that she put to herself the question, *What, if Mr. Wildair should be in love?* The thought no sooner struck into her head, than all the advantages, accruing from a match with a fine young gentleman of two thousand

a year, occurred to her imagination, and of consequence a wish succeeded, that is, so far as regarded the estate, for hitherto his person, though familiar to her, had not much engaged her attention; but his submissive respectful carriage, his squeezes, joined to his looks, &c. added to her own prepossession, gave her some hope that it might be so, and in a month or two more, this dum distant courtship brought her to the state *Wildair* wished; who having more knowledge than she, and seeing that he daily gained ground on her affections, began to think it time to make an open attack. However, a consciousness of his own baseness, and the virtue of his mistress, deterred him for a long time from making the declaration; but at length he took courage to speak, and as he clothed his design with the mask of honour, was pretty favourably received for the first time. He had cautioned her from mentioning the affair to her mother, for fear of the secret being blabbed before their happiness was compleated, which she simply complied with: And to make short of my story, by innumerable oaths and execrations, of marrying her as soon as he should come of age, after a siege of
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of thirteen months, the place surrendered at discretion; and he has since told me, that the very night after, he began to reflect with himself, what the difference was between the pleasure he enjoyed in that cursed rencounter, and what he had frequently experienced with his laundress; that this had disturbed his peace and rest for thirteen months, and was at last procured at the expence of the most execrable wilful perjury, and in the end, might cost him many years remorse, as being the ruin of two persons of worth and honour; for in two or three months, miss proved with child, and two or three more made it publick. He was charged with his vows, which he had the impudence to deny; the mother died in a few weeks of grief and vexation; the unhappy lady miscarried at the end of her six months, with the shock that her mother's death, was caus'd by her own folly, recovered but slowly, and in about six months more, died of a consumption occasioned by his vile ingratitude. The affair made a great noise at the university; and it was impossible to conceal the circumstances from his mother, who felt, on that occasion, more agonizing pangs for his baseness than in the night she bore him. She ordered him to quit the uni-

versity and set out on his travels, which he willingly complied with, as the fatal catastrophe of the amour had given him such a sense of his folly, that he determined for the future, to bridle a passion which he saw productive of so many mischiefs. He was really sorry for his behaviour, and would, in spite of the laugh of the world, have made the young lady reparation if she had lived; but he was too long before he took the resolution. She having been removed from *Oxford*, as soon as her disgrace became known to her family, he wrote her a letter, that he sincerely repented of his usage of her, and meant to go down in eight days, to marry her publickly, and by that means wipe off the scandal he had brought upon her, and in some measure atone for his perfidious breach of the most solemn vows. But this letter came but two days before she died, and only served to confirm what before had stood only upon her own testimony.

When he heard of her death, he was like one out of his senses, not so much from a love of her, for he owned possession on his own terms had much abated the generous flame, but from a principle of conscience, that he had not in time performed those promises, which might have

have saved her life, and him from the guilt of blood and perjury. As soon as his mind could be calmed, he set out for *Paris*, and from thence to *Italy*, and made the tour of *Europe* in about four years, without so much as thinking of an intrigue, of which he seemed perfectly fatieted; and tho' he afterwards gave a loose to all manner of debauchery and leudness, yet there was one degree of wickedness he would never be guilty of, that of seducing the innocent of any station. With women, who had already made shipwreck of their chastity, he could be as free as any one, but after the *Oxford* affair, never would load his conscience with a crime of that nature, directly or indirectly. He loved the game with all his heart, but somebody else must run it down without his knowledge; for he thought himself equally concerned if he but knew of such a design, and did not prevent it, which he thought was the smallest attonement he could make for his former conduct.

When he returned from his travels, he found his mother dead, and his fortune in flourishing circumstances. He stayed but a short time in *London*, it being summer time when he arrived, but went to

his seat in the country, where he amused himself for about two years, in repairing his mansion-house, and adding some new policy after the *Italian* taste ; but at that time a small difference between him and a neighbour brought him to town to defend a law-suit, commenced against him. He might then be about five and twenty, of a healthy constitution, and the more so, as he had been but little debilitated either with women or wine. He set up an handsome equipage, and made a very genteel figure in the *beau monde*, kept the best of company, and behaved in every thing like the truly polite gentleman ; insomuch, that at that time he had several overtures made him, of very honourable and advantageous matches ; but his hour was not yet come, he had hitherto seen no face who could charm him out of his beloved liberty, and in a short time fell into a set of company, who gave him such an indifferent opinion of women in general, that he was on the decline of life, before he ventured on the bonds of wedlock.

He had not been many months in town, before he met with some of his acquaintance, who had entered of the inns of court, not to learn law, or read cases and precedents, but study the vices
and

and follies of the town, in which they had made great proficiency. *Wildair*, to a complaisant behaviour, inseparable from a well bred gentleman, joined a natural easiness of temper, which made him the prey of every company. Politeness obliged him, in some measure, to bear with company he did not like; and good nature prevailed on him to join in diversions he did not, even in the very first stage of his life, approve of. In a word, for fear of being thought queer or supercilious, he was easily persuaded to join in the humours of all company, till time made it habitual, and of course agreeable.

The first of his initiation into the mysteries of a town life, happened at a tavern near the *Temple*, with a set of young fellows from the university. They had drank pretty freely all the evening, and grew frolicksome; after breaking all the china and glasses in the room, beating the drawer, and affronting the landlord, in all which poor *Wildair* was only a spectator, they must needs go upon a ramble, beat up all the bawdy-houses in the hundreds of *Drury*, and *Covent-Garden*, and at last adjourn to a bagnio, where each of them lay in state, with a brace of girls they picked up in their patrol. As far

as a moderate glass, and a girl would go in a civil way, *Jack* could bear a bob with the best of them; but he had soon too much of this lying in state, and wished with all his heart the frolick was at an end; but he was in for it, and durst not flinch lest his manhood should be called in question, both by the wenches, and his mad companions. The frolick lasted for three days and three nights, only with shifting the scene of action, and their damsels; at last they parted, and *Jack* went home confoundedly sick and jaded with the debauch, which was the greatest he ever saw or heard of before. He was obliged to keep his room for a week, and would for a month, if he had not been laughed out of it by the seasoned sots, who swore they would post him if he did not return to his colours. The next ramble they had, they beat all the watchmen, and broke all the windows in half a dozen streets, till they were overpowered by a fresh number of mirmidons, who came out with all manner of domestick weapons, to save their heads and glasses. Our groupe of rakes were well beat, and among the rest *Jack Wildair* had his head broke and bruised dismally, and his arm dislocated; they were all carried to the round-house except

cept *Jack*, who on account of his disaster being greater than any of the rest, was permitted to be carried to his chambers, where a surgeon being sent for, his head was plaistered and his arm set right. He then took a pious resolution, never to venture into any such dangers for the future. However, he had not the grace to keep his resolution longer than till he was recovered of his bruises; for his companions visited him every day, till he was quite well, and then prevailed on him to go to the tavern, only to pass an hour or two without design of a debauch. One bottle begot another, and that a third, and so on till their spirits were elevated, and *Jack Wildair* who, by the effects of his late ramble, was able to bear less than ordinary, grew soon mellow enough to be wrought upon to any purpose. Girls were called for, and most part of the night spent that way. Towards morning they went to scour the streets, and stumbled into a gaming house, where they met with a set of polite sharpers, who easing our squires of a considerable sum of money, their loss made them sober, but their avarice prompted them to stay in hopes of recovery, tho' it was not their night of luck; for towards ten in the morning

they were all stripped, and had the imprudence to send for more money; in a word, unhappy *Jack* lost in the space of twenty-four hours the sum of three thousand pounds, which was all the running cash he had at the banker's, and which being gone, the sharpers broke up play, and *Wildair* went home cursing his stars for this new mishap. But the more he thought of it the more he was chagrined; for he had been a good œconomist, and loved money too well to be easily comforted for so considerable a loss, though a trifle to a man in his circumstances. His companions met in the evening to condole one another's misfortunes, and adjourned to the tavern to drown sorrow. *Jack* needed no entreaties now; for he was willing to do any thing to put the cursed loss out of his head. They drank cheerfully and had their quota of damsels as usual, and towards morning were tempted to go to the same place in hopes of better luck. They had nothing then very considerable to lose, and fortune seemed on their side; for they recovered a few hundreds, which in the end proved their misfortune: For this little smile of fickle fortune gave them hopes of recovering all, and set *Jack* upon selling out some part of his stock in the public

public funds in order to be provided for the experiment. But this went as the first, and his chagrin was so heightened, that he plyed the bottle hard to cure melancholly, was drunk for some weeks together, and every sober hour he had, his avarice prompted him to employ in trials of recovery, till in a few months he lost all his ready money, and was obliged to cut down his timber, for a fresh supply. That went as before, and in a few years his estate was over head and ears in mortgages.

The company he was obliged to keep on these occasions, quite spoiled his morals, and his chagrin made him an habitual sot, and quite abandoned to all the wild flights of debauchery. Wenching was his darling foible, which in the beginning of his days, the remorse of the intrigue at *Oxford*, and the polite notions he had picked up in the company he had first used, restrained within moderate bounds; but since he changed his company, and allowed himself the immoderate use of the bottle, his delicacy of sentiment and behaviour, by degrees, wore off, and he gave a loose to the natural impetus of his disposition; always stimulated by the fumes of wine, there was no species of wickedness to which he

was not addicted. The vigour of his constitution held out surprisngly, and that encouraged him the more to go on; for he thought nothing could hurt him. Though he saw most of his first seducers laid in their grave by the effects of riot and excess, yet as he felt no decline in his own strength, he scorned to give over, but got a fresh supply of champions in the good cause, and saw them and their sons out. But *Jack* was not made of iron, nor immortal; for what by excess in drinking, and the effects of several small taints, which he was seldom without, and getting half a dozen times over head and ears in the powdering tub, towards the age of forty, he began to decay visibly, and was in constitution about sixty. But still habit had begot an inclination which nature of itself could not supply; stimulus, broths, and restoratives are then recurred to, which kept up his reputation among the girls for a few years longer; but then, the once vigorous active *Wildair* dwindled into a meer stalking piece of rotten iniquity; and he was obliged to satisfy himself, with introducing young thoughtless men of quality into the ways of the town, and reading them exemplary lessons from his former atcheivements.

Jack,

Jack, besides rotten bones gained in the fields of *Venus*, had many noble scars, obtained by fighting the cause of the ladies of the town and his abandoned mistresses. He did not want a large share of natural courage, but it was his misfortune that it never was displayed in any cause sufficient to justify the death of a rat, but upon some drunken quarrel, or the rotten reputation of some prostitute. His first duel was fought in *Hyde-park*, on a fit of jealousy about a kept-mistress, for *Jack* had one of them almost in every corner, on each of whom he bestowed more than would have kept half a dozen honest women. He had carried an intimate friend of his, to pass an hour or two with his favourite she, but being some how called away, he left them together for about an hour; when he came back, a jealous crotchet struck him in the head, that they had been at the old trade of basket-making in his absence. He took the girl aside and taxed her rudely with it, who answering with spirit, a quarrel and blows ensued, in which the friend interposed out of complaisance to the sex. This enraged and confirmed jealous pated *Jack* in his former suspicions, and in the end produced a challenge, in which *Jack* had the worst.

worst. His next quarrel happened in the play-house, about a lady of the same quality, whom he would needs hand out, tho' her kind keeper was in presence, which sent both the fools to the back of *Montague-house* next morning, and the keeper to his grave, for *Jack*, at the second pass, run him thro' the lungs. He absconded for some time, but at last took his trial, and by the favour of a *Middlesex* jury was acquitted. He grew very pious for two or three months after this disaster, discarded all his kept madams, and resolved to lead quite a new life; but habit had got too deep a root to be so soon conquered, he returned to his old haunts, but never afterwards could be prevail'd on to keep a mistress for himself or hunt in the purlieus of those who did. He had several other skirmishes, some on account of wenches, in all which he came off victorious, except the first, tho' it is observable the disputes in all of them were not worth a rush, and in every one *Jack* was the aggressor. The last of them happened in his fiftieth year, and was founded on a dispute about a girl he and another had picked up in the *Strand*, that is, which should have her first; tho', God knows, at the same time he had no
more

more use for a wench, than a cart has for a third wheel. The affair was referred to the damsel, who gave the preference to the other gentleman about a year or two younger than him, though they were pretty much upon a par as to abilities; but however the decision did not please *Jack*, who appealed from it to his sword. The other veteran admitted the appeal, and met in the five-fields at *Chelsea*, where *Jack* disarmed his antagonist, receiving only a prick in his left side. The wound was by no means dangerous, but *Jack* was in a bad habit of body, and the least trifle that set the peccant humours, with which he abounded, in motion, endangered his life. The surgeon took all the care of him possible, but could not prevent a fever; an inflammation ensued, and all the symptoms of a mortification followed. The physicians declared his case desperate, and poor *Jack* was desired to prepare for death, a subject he had never once thought of, with any seriousness. Religion he truly knew the theory of, but had experienced very little of the joys resulting from the practice of it; for even in his sober period of life, the little spirit of religion which reigned among people of fashion, had accustomed him at that
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time, to think all revelation a piece of priestcraft, and at best a state-engine to keep the multitude in awe; and when he came to throw off the dictates of natural religion, and good manners, it was easy for him to join in the ridicule of every thing that was sacred, which he carried to as great a length, as any of his profligate companions; was a member of a society, known by the name of the hell fire club, where the most sacred mysteries of revelation and religion, were the subject of their scurrilous mirth, atheism professed, and every abominable vice practised openly, and in defiance to all laws human and divine.

If *Jack* had ever any remorse at reflecting on these impieties, he styled them as the effects of enthusiasm, the dreams of the nursery, and the prejudices of education. But at this time, when death seemed inevitable, his courage failed him; he durst not look into the dark abyss of eternity without horror and remorse, heightened by the immorality of his actions, as well as the impiety of his doctrines. He recollected the advantages he had once enjoyed of birth, health, fortune and education, and began to call himself to an account for the
use

use he had made of them: He asked himself what he had done with them all, they being gone and not the least vestige remaining of any one action of his life, which seemed rational. He had not only been himself abandoned, but had seduced his own son and as many youths as unhappily fell in his way, to the same pernicious steps he had followed. All these reflections crowding on his imagination at once, overwhelmed him with despair.

He was surrounded with his old companions in debauchery, who bemoaning his departure, which they looked upon as certain, endeavoured by their ill-timed railery to rouse him from the melancholy with which they saw him overwhelmed. Even in this critical conjuncture, such is the force of habit, and the fear of ridicule, he was afraid to discover his remorse before them, or disapprove of their rude jokes upon another world; but his valet de chambre, who lived with him ever since he was at the university, and now grown old in his service, and as little a sharer in his vices, as it was possible for a servant to be, had compassion on his master, and took an opportunity, when the coast was clear of these reprobates,

reprobates, to intrude his old tutor to his bedside. This good man, who lived on a pension he had settled on him for life, was so disgusted at his manner of life, that he had not seen him for twelve or fifteen years. Their meeting now was moving, and had an extraordinary effect; Mr. *Wildair* opened his doubts to his good old friend, and by his help was restored to a just sense of his folly, and a tranquility of mind always attendant on repentance, founded on conviction. He waited the hour of his dissolution, with christian calmness, and settled his affairs, which were then in the utmost confusion, and gave orders to shut his door against all his old associates. But it pleased God that the dangerous symptoms of his case abated, and in a few weeks he was once more on his legs, tho' it was some months before he enjoyed a confirmed state of health; since which he has led a new life, and is as much a pattern of moderation and temperance, as he was formerly of riot and excess. He married in about two years after, and in the winter of life enjoyed more rational felicity, than ever he knew, since he left the paths of virtue and sobriety. But there is one thing which sticks by him as the legacy of his former manner of life, the gout and feebleness,

bleness, with many bodily ailments, which no medicine can cure in a constitution so much debilitated; his mind is still active, and his faculties entire, which he thinks he cannot employ better than in giving this short abridgment of his trifling life, that from it the youth of the present age may learn what labour, toil, and vanity attend the immoderate pursuit of the pleasures of the town.

Thus, gentlemen, I have given you (in the third person) a brief account of the transactions of a life spent in pursuit of pleasure; and I leave you to judge how miserably I have been deceived. I believe if you had recourse to the particulars here mentioned, the important business of going to the play, the masquerade, opera, and drawing-room, dressing, and yawning over a dish of chocolate at the coffee-house, &c. *mutatis mutandis*, this journal of my life may serve for that of any of yours, and shew you what a ridiculous figure you must make in the eyes of all rational beings, and how contemptible you must appear to yourselves, when the heat of blood and lawless passion can give you time to reflect and make the comparison.

I had health and strength of constitution
beyond

beyond most of my contemporaries; I had a liberal education, and my mind stored with every branch of polite literature; I had a tolerable genius, an easy or rather affluent fortune; I set out in the world with a fair reputation, and the esteem, friendship, and alliance of some of the best families in *England*: But what use have I made of all these advantages? Have they contributed in the least to my own satisfaction, or peace of mind? Or have they been employed in the service of my king and country? No, I have perverted them all, and have spent more than the ordinary years of man, in making myself ridiculous, miserable, and unhappy, and in doing more mischief than the repentance of several centuries, without the interposition of divine mercy, can atone for.

And for what have I been thus unhappy? Not for real present pleasure, but for actual pain and drudgery, even in the highest moments of sensual gratification: For if you mark in every period of my revelling days, I acted with remorse and against the manifest light of reason, and the dictates of my conscience. How dull is the pleasure of intemperance, when neither the glass nor company have any relish, but are followed out of frolic,

lic, and guzzled out of wantonness! And how insipid the pleasures of incontinence, when nature is not consulted, but the senses stimulated by wine, drugs, or unnatural obscenities! And yet this is the case of us all. When we seem most intent on these brutal pursuits, and was my case in particular, as my education had taught me the meanness and vanity of those gratifications, I despised them tho' I followed them, and saw the lurking poison, tho' I had not courage to refrain the snare. I now can recollect how little satisfaction I received in the highest moments of sensual delight, and how great the compunction I suffered after a debauch, which I had no other way to quell but by plunging into another, and drowning reflection in a joyless repetition of the same painful vanities.

If I had acted in pursuit of pleasure, without any regard to the morality of my actions with respect to God and myself, however irreligious I might appear to be, yet still I should have had some claim to rationality; but if I had, I must not have continued in the immoderate pursuit of mere sensual gratifications. If I acted rationally from this principle, I must have considered whether the pleasure courted, counterballanced the pain attending

attending the pursuit, or the necessary consequence of attaining it. In both which cases I must have been deterred from the immoderate use of them ; for I believe your experience will join with mine, that there is nothing in nature more momentary than the pleasure resulting from incontinent joy. It is scarce to be measured by thought, nor capable of being reflected on while it lasts. It is gone as soon as we find it, and like a shadow flies before we take its dimensions. Now allowing that ravishing immeasurable instant as full of rapture as the warmest imagination can figure to itself, yet is it to be compared, as to its duration, with the pains, the toils, the dangers, that precede it? I remember when I was hot in chase of my unfortunate amour at *Oxford*, I spent many nights, in which sleep was a stranger to my eyes, or peace or tranquility to my mind, and remained like a creature upon the rack, for a year together, sometimes frozen with a frown, and set in a blaze with a smile. I felt all the extreams of the torrid and frigid *Zones*, in the twinkling of an eye, and lived for months in greater perturbation of blood and spirits, than a person in a hectic fever. To enjoy her, I risked my reputation among all honest

honest men; and by my perjury, my title to eternal happiness: And what was my mighty conquest? a moment's guilty pleasure, which no sooner past, than finding the greatness of my disappointment, my conscience brought to my mind a black list of all the crimes which centered in that one act, and taught me to compare the torture I had endured, with the fleeting bliss. But, good God! how monstrous the disproportion, when I only take in the prelude to that horrid deed! and how infinitely beyond all rational comparison, when to the account is added the fatal consequences, the dreadful catastrophe, and the remorse attending on the painful reflection! That thought, tho' near fifty years ago, is still fresh in my memory; and tho' I have endeavoured since, by the most sincere repentance, to obliterate the despair it imprinted on my mind, yet still it recurs, and gives a damp, to every chearful thought; and yet this is a peccadillo, a venial transgression, a flight of youth with many of you, which you can boast of over a bottle, and repeat, with hellish pleasure, every circumstance of the fiend-like stratagem, put in practice to delude the credulous and unwary fair, to ruin, infamy, and destruction.

I repented of that base action, but I still pursued the ways of vice and painful folly, and felt the same disappointment in every enjoyment, tho' attended with fewer causes of remorse. I spent my youthful time in search of objects to gratify an appetite, which was far from being natural; I sat up late, toiled more than my horses to obtain them; and at last, in the critical minute, fear of diseases palled my appetite, and gave me some moments of painful reflection; yet I smothered these, and in spite of nature and common sense, I embraced rottenness, and enjoyed without hope, or even possibility of satisfaction; and in those hours condescended to meanesses not only beneath me, as a gentleman, but inconsistent with my title as a rational creature.

Most gentlemen have some degree of pride, and you fine gentlemen are generally sooner affected by that passion than any other; yet in your present immoderate pursuit of the pleasures resulting from the gratification of the grosser appetites, you seem to be in no degree influenced by the smallest spark of it; for you have in a manner removed all distinction, not only between you and the vulgar herd of mankind, but have in
some

some measure, put yourselves upon a level with the meanest brute.

What is it that distinguishes you from the brute creation? It is not your shape, nor erect figure, nor your risible faculty alone can rank you among men; a monkey can walk erect, grin, and do a thousand tricks to enable him to call you brother, if you had no better authority to call yourselves men than these outward marks: He eats apples, and acorns, with as high a gult as you do the most delicate *Ragout*; you may make him dance to musick, and please him with the found of a drum: He is amorous too, and doats upon a mistress, and loves variety as well as any rake in *Covent-garden*: He can be wicked and vicious sometimes, and as well pleased with mischievous tricks as you are, when you have unriggered a girl of the town, broke her windows, bilked a reckoning, or beat the harmless watch. How then can you dispute his kindred, or shun embracing your brother brute? unless you make a display of your boasted and superior reason, which removes you many degrees above him, and the rest of the less mischievous four-footed tribe.

If reason is the only distinction between you and the animal world, it must
 DOUBTLESS BE

be active reason, it must not be latent, and never used but in order to debase it : Now I desire to know, if, consistent with your claim to humanity, you are not obliged, in honour of your species, to be actuated by other motives, and pursue other schemes of happiness than the brute world, under which title I comprehend numbers who walk upon two legs as well as quadrupedes.

Supposing a young man just out of his puberty, and ready to enter upon active life, should pause a while and consult with himself in this manner ; ‘ I am
 ‘ endued with a being capable of pleasure
 ‘ and pain ; I have faculties adapted to
 ‘ attain the one, and pursue the other : I
 ‘ find the principle of self-love and
 ‘ a desire of pleasure strongly implant-
 ‘ ed in my nature ; and my reason tells
 ‘ me, I have a right to indulge that self-
 ‘ love, and to pursue true felicity and
 ‘ solid pleasure : But how this is to
 ‘ be gratified, and that obtained, is
 ‘ the main question ; I find my senses and
 ‘ appetites in an uproar, each pressing
 ‘ forward to be employed on the great
 ‘ business of pleasure ; they all promise
 ‘ me extacy ; but how shall I determine
 ‘ which of them to employ first ? Last,
 ‘ I find the strongest, and by conse-
 ‘ quence

‘ quence the most urgent, I see an oppor-
 ‘ tunity advancing, I will try what re-
 ‘ sults from his mighty promises; but
 ‘ stop, I see yonder brutes satiated with
 ‘ enjoyment, sure it can be but low plea-
 ‘ sure, which I must participate in com-
 ‘ mon with them, they act by mere in-
 ‘ stinct and coercive impulse, I have
 ‘ reason to guide me in my choice: Shall
 ‘ I be directed by the acrimony of my
 ‘ blood, and content myself with a mo-
 ‘ mentary flash, when I believe I am
 ‘ capable of some kind of pleasure,
 ‘ wherein my reason may bear a part,
 ‘ and heighten the enjoyment, in which
 ‘ the senses are but under agents, and
 ‘ not the chief persons in the drama?’

After such a soliloquy, is it natural to
 suppose any youth would undergo the
 toils and fatigue of a *Covent-garden*
 ramble, or a modern debauch? especially
 if some grave person, on whose veracity
 he could depend, should tell him seriously,

‘ Sir, I have tryed all the pleasures re-
 ‘ sulting from intrigue, I have spent my
 ‘ life, strength, and estate, in the pursuit
 ‘ of this species of mad gallantry, and
 ‘ can assure you the whole is a rape upon
 ‘ human nature, a toil instead of plea-
 ‘ sure; and pain, rottenness, and infamy
 ‘ its necessary consequence.’

Should any man take upon him to call any one of you smart fellows, who bluster at all the bawdy-houses in town, a monkey, or an ass, how would your choler boil? your mistaken notions of honour would certainly call him to an account for it, and you would risk soul and body to be revenged of the indignity; yet, if you consider yourselves in some of your midnight freaks, how much like brutes you act, you must own the epithet justly belongs to you. You have reversed the fable; you do not appear the ass in the lyon's skin, but rather the lion in the ass's skin; you conceal the man, and discover nothing but the brute, in spite of reason, the taylor, the milliner, and all the rest of them, who endeavour to cloathe you with the appearance of humanity. Does not this alarm your pride, and inspire you with the ambition of finding out some other pastime, some other scheme of happiness, than this which so much debases you? I grant you, this appetite was really bestowed on us, to soften life, and procure us a degree of pleasure, the highest the senses are capable of; but that pleasure is far from consisting in mere action, there, the brute is even with us, and perhaps excels us; no, it consists

sists in the mental union of the sexes, and that satisfaction resulting from the harmony of souls, to which, enjoyment is but an adjunct, and contributes but in the lowest degree to the ravishing felicity arising from the social flame.

Where this subsists, our pleasures are calm and serene, without the hurry and tumult which is produced by a passion founded on the mere appetite: I own, even this may have its allay, and I would not pretend to point it out as the *summum bonum*; all I would hint is, that at least to me, after a life spent in the gratification of the grosser senses, I can find more real happiness in one month, than I enjoyed for forty years while I followed the dictates of a depraved appetite, and the fashionable follies of a debauched age.

But if pride, or distinction from the brute, has no weight, desire of fame, and the esteem of mankind should have some influence upon you, which the immoderate pursuit of pleasure is absolutely inconsistent with; for however fashionable it may be to be wicked, whatever number of great names may enroll themselves of your society, yet the generality of mankind despise you, and look upon you as gaudy vermin, of no real signification in nature, without any power of doing

good, but an absolute nuisance to civil society. This is the calm thought of every thinking man, however low his station may be, and however low custom may oblige him to cringe to your outside, and pay homage to your ill merited titles. How should it be otherwise? we know man is a sociable creature, and formed to promote the general good of that system or community of which he is born a member. In proportion to the usefulness every man is of in his own sphere, so is the esteem he is entitled to from his fellow creatures; but how can you justify your claim to the esteem of any rational creature, who live in a constant breach of the rules of good manners, and the most sacred laws that bind mankind together? You waste your substance in riot and luxury, instead of assisting your country with your wealth and council; that time, which should be spent in the senate, the cabinet, or in the exercises preparatory to that sphere of life, is lavished away on thoughtless diversions, or murdered in a brothel; that courage, which ought to be displayed in defence of the religion, liberty, and laws of your country, is basely prostituted in the dirty quarrels of the stews; and a life, which your country
has

has a right to, wantonly thrown away in defence of some worthless female, who has neither fame, honour, or virtue; for what right then have you to the esteem of mankind, when there is no one action of your lives but what is either merely insignificant, or destructive of the peace and morals of your fellow subjects. You are at best but blanks in nature, and die never to be remembered, at least for your good deeds, for few of you become fathers, or if you chance to beget an offspring, they live but to curse you for their being, which you have tainted with the dregs of your debauchery, and for their inheritance of those vices and diseases, which make life a burden for many succeeding generations.

But if, neither pride of distinction, nor love of fame, and the esteem of mankind can work upon your minds, too much taken up with your dear selves, yet let love of that self have its due weight, and that, without any other consideration, must direct you to moderation, the care of your health, and dread of those torments attending a battered constitution, must soon alarm you to some reflection. I have seen most of my contemporaries laid in their graves, not with a load of years, but with the meer weight of vice and

unnatural debauches. They made a flash for a few years, and concealed their inward torments by a fair outside, but in a little time age overtook them in the spring of life, and like untimely fruit, they became rotten before they were half ripe: Had they stepped off the stage as soon as weakness and diseases attacked them, they might be said to have been in some measure happy, but they dragged on a year or two more in exquisite pain and agony, and tumbled into the other world, loaded with every acute and chronic disease, the necessary result of their promiscuous commerce, with the abandoned part of the female sex. If you are for pleasure, and mean to make it the mighty business of life, sure it is worth your while to prolong it, and enjoy it as many years as you can; which, believe me, you may do, with a much higher relish, if you use it but moderately: Whereas the most you can make of it, in the present way, is perhaps a dozen years; more than eleven of which are miserable, without the least taste of natural satisfaction, or any other species of pleasure, but what flows from the hellish reflection of being superlatively wicked, and that you dare be more vicious than the bulk of mankind.

Is it possible to suppose human nature so far depraved as to prefer pain, misery, and infamy, attended only with a momentary sensation, to all the pleasures of health, fame, honour, and reputation; that they should obey the gratification of lust and intemperance, in opposition to the call of self love, the dictates of conscience, the interest of their offspring, the preservation of their estates, and all the calls of their country, virtue, and religion? Does the labouring porter, who drudges under a load, endure half the fatigue of body, which you do in your midnight rambles? Are not his slumbers less disturbed, and his rest ten times more refreshing, though on a flock-bed and in a garret, than what you taste under a silk canopy, a down bed and a gilded roof? Does he not walk in the morning to his daily labour, with a mind chearful and unruffled with those storms of passion, those dire pangs of remorse, and those agonizing pains, begot by the remaining fumes of an unnatural debauch? Yes, he does, and knows pleasures in life to which you are strangers, and which all your boasted knowledge cannot find out, nor your estate purchase. Good God! can the pleasures of less than a moment, atone for the loss of health, time, virtue,

and reputation; or the noisy tumultuous pleasures of a midnight revel, compensate for an age of pain and misery, the constant companions of an old age anticipated by excess and riot!

Can we suppose we are born for ourselves, that time is measured out only to help us to invent new ways to debase humanity, and stamp ignominy on the species? Are all our talents, our senses, and faculties bestowed on us, to be abused? Were they created for no rational purpose, or only with intent to destroy the human system? for sure, if all mankind were to follow your examples, the race in a few centuries would become extinct, and the remaining spaces filled up with a thousand greater evils than the poets feigned of *Pandora's* box, since even hope itself would vanish, and leave nothing in its place but horror and despair.

Our friends, our children, our families and relations, but especially our country, have a right to our time, and the use of those talents nature has endued us with; but what share in your division of time have you left for them or the other serious concerns of life? not one moment; all is absorbed in the vast abyss of guilty, and at best ridiculous pleasure.

For

For your own sake, for your country's sake, for the sake of virtue and reputation, call home your scattered thoughts, and think before it is too late, how valuable are the blessings you throw away, and how vain and pernicious those you court; how disappointing in fruition, and how big with misery and pain, are the joys you devote your time to. For my share, old as I am, I am still for pleasure, and grant it to be the great blessing of life: It is the hope of finding it, gives motion to the whole human system, and makes life tolerable to the most wretched. Nor would I chuse to confine the meaning of the word, to the rigid rules of the stoics, or the dull precepts of lazy gown-men: No, I am for active happiness, where all the faculties are employed, and every sense contributes its quota to furnish out the luxurious banquet: I am not for exploding entirely the diversions of the town, or prescribing absolute celibacy or monkish temperance; by no means; I only recommend moderation in the use of those pleasures, as the only means to continue them what they are; which of itself is argument sufficient to convince every rational creature of the folly of excess, but gathers infinite strength when joined to reasons drawn from the painful experience of

all those who have swerved from the golden medium, and is enforced by the principles of morality and religion, and the contemptuous figure a debauchee makes in the eyes of all mankind; for to a rational being, impressed with any notion of religion, either natural or revealed, the journal of the life of one of your town-rakes, would seem the history of a monster, no way of kin to our species; and the horror of it would almost make him despise manhood, for being capable of making so ridiculous an appearance, and acting a part so contrary to the will of an Infinite Being, and the dictates of a rational conscience.

I think myself more capable of advising than most men, not from any superiority of judgment, but from my experience of both stations of life. I spent the best part of my youth in the same wicked manner you do, and knew no peace, tasted no real pleasure, but all was pain, disappointment, and anguish; but it pleased God to give me an opportunity of reflection, and of discovering my error; I saw the mad folly of that course of life, and reformed out of a principle of conscience, by which means I recovered as much of my health, as it was

was possible for a constitution so debilitated as mine was: And what was more valuable, I recovered the use of my reason, and the power of thinking, which was followed by a calm serenity of mind I had never known in the course of my whole life. The sole reflection that I was sincerely convinced of my folly, and that I had time to repent of, and resolution to abstain from those vices which habit had made a kind of second nature, enables me at this day to bear with all the agonizing pains of the gout, and a complication of other disorders, with patience and resignation, as I know them the natural result, as well as the just punishment of my former actions; and in the worst fit of these chronic diseases, I taste a pleasure from the consciousness of acting at present a rational part, which the highest enjoyment of sense never imparted to me in the time of my youthful follies.

In a word, gentlemen, if pleasure for the present, peace here, and happiness hereafter, if the love of life, hope of fame, the honour of your families, the welfare of your posterity, the blessings of your country, and the ties of religion and morality, can have any weight with you, you will abate somewhat of that
 excess,

excess, which now reigns in all polite diversions, and act a part consistent with your character as men as well as gentlemen ; you have only a little fashionable railery to bear at first, to stand the laugh of the thoughtless, and exchange the approbation of men of sense and probity, for the short-liv'd sneer of the giddy rake.

I am, GENTLEMEN,

Your real Friend,

And humble Servant,

JACK WILDIAR.



A

Second LETTER.

GENTLEMEN,

IN my first epistle I only mentioned Duelling as one of the ridiculous transactions of my life, without making any reflections on the gross absurdity of that custom, resolving to speak to it apart; to which I am more induced by the late countenance it has met with, in this metropolis, from persons whose courage and honour had been better employed in the cause of their country. I shall now take the liberty to give you my notions of true courage, or what the moralists call fortitude, in order that you may discern how much of it goes to a modern duel.

It would lead me beyond my present purpose to enter into a definition of fortitude in general, of which, courage, or military fortitude, is but a branch: I shall therefore confine myself to that kind of courage, which the bulk of mankind

figure

figure to themselves in fighting a man of honour.

To suppose courage genuine, it must certainly be supposed rational; it must be the effect of thought and reason, and not the effect of a mechanic impulse, the heat of blood, or the over-boiling of the passions. An utter contempt of death, or risking one's person without honest and reasonable motives, has no claim to the name of courage, but is justly termed brutal temerity and rashness. For the truly courageous man must be convinced, that the cause he engages in is really virtuous; he must know the value of the end proposed, and the just worth of his own life, to himself, his family, and the publick, that he may be able to judge how far it may be proper to oppose them to one another. This deliberating is far from being mixed with any degree of cowardice, but is rational courage, such as man only can boast; all beyond this is brutal fierceness, and the effects of mere mechanism; and without we suppose this deliberation, this comparison of the unfitness of things, we must admit the agent acts by mere impulse, as does his horse, and that there is nothing moral in the action.

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However, this kind of mad courage, this utter contempt of death without any reason, is admired by the gaping multitude, who have not sagacity enough to discern its ugly source, and that the chief ingredients of this species of folly, is anger and pride. The passion of anger sets the blood in a ferment, drives the finer spirits up to the brain, and by their hurry disables the mind from any perception of danger, or reflection on causes and consequences, and she has no choice left, but to follow the wild impulse of revenge. This, any man the least conversant with the passions and their effects, may easily discover; and that most of what is ascribed to courage by the vulgar, is owing to that blind headstrong passion, anger; for whenever any signs of this false courage appear, their blood boils over, it flashes in their faces, and they act without the least sign of rationality; but sure, a thinking man can never pride himself for being angry, desire praise for being proud, or respect, because he is mad, of which this species of courage is the legitimate sign.

There is a kind of courage acquired by habit, a contempt of danger by being often exposed to the objects of death. Thus men, by being often in battles, and
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coming off with life, do not apprehend the danger so great as it is, or as they at first imagined, and therefore every fresh engagement, run on with fresh alacrity : But a man running up to the mouth of a cannon without fear, by the help of this habitual courage, has no claim to true courage; he faces danger because he does not apprehend it; and where it is not seen, or valued in its real proportion, it is the same thing as if it did not exist at all: And for this reason, constitutional courage has no title to the name of that cardinal virtue, since it proceeds from a fiery hot disposition, the mechanism of the body, and crasis of the fluids, is chiefly produced by anger, pride, and a predominancy of choler in their constitution. Actions resulting from this kind of courage have nothing moral in them; the agent is actuated by meer impulse, is no more than a machine set in motion by the acting of outward objects upon the animal spirits and the mass of blood, and is the lowest kind of courage, except artificial courage raised by the effects of spirituous liquors and opiates, the effects of which are so often seen upon our common soldiers, which is no more to be accounted courage, than the raving of a madman is

to be accounted wisdom. However these three degrees, or species of courage, viz. habitual, constitutional, and artificial, make up the sum of that kind of courage, admired by the vulgar in military men and bullies; and to a mixture of all them, we may suppose is owing the courage of the modern duellists; for it is impossible, that one spark of real rational courage can give countenance to the unnatural combats of our days. They are either constitutionally brave, and act by meer impulse and passion, or habitually heroic, as butchers are habitually cruel; and neither foresee their own danger, nor value the danger of others; or they borrow their mock courage from the devil or strong liquors: For let us examine the cause of our late duels, or indeed of most that have happened for several years past, and it is impossible for us to suppose, that the combatants once considered the justice or consequence of their quarrel, the value of their own lives, or weighed any one circumstance attending an action of that consequence. If they did, is it possible, that a rational creature can put his own life, or the life of any of his fellow-creatures, in competition with the reputation of a common prostitute; or suppose death, and
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damnation, the only attonement can be made for a rash word or passionate expression? And yet these two are the mighty motives for the valuable lives that have been thrown away in this enthusiastic fit of courage; which, sure, no man in his wits can pretend to be the result of rational comparison, or prudent deliberation; if it is not, where is the honour of being a meer machine acted upon by passionate impulse, or hurried away by such a kind of courage?

Is your honour engaged? No; for true honour consists in doing neither a bad, nor a foolish thing; the one declares you a fool, and the other a knave; to both which epithets you avow your claim, when engaged in a duel on such causes as commonly produce them. You act a fool, when you venture your life against what is not an equivalent, as much as if you laid ten to one when the bet was equal; and a knave as you usurp the sword of justice from the lawful magistrate, and pretend to punish a crime with death by your own authority, which in itself scarce deserves a blow, as you dispose of your own life without the consent of the public, who have a property in it, or of that Being who bestowed it on you, to answer
 but what is the use of this? wiser

wiser purposes than to be thrown away on every drunken brawler, or in the defence of some lewd quarrel. Is it consistent with the man of honour or integrity to be proud of the ignominious names of knave and fool? No; his actions bespeak him rational, and honest, both to himself and his neighbour; he looks upon his life as entrusted to him for the good of society, and dares not part with it, or risk it but in a cause equal to the loss which the public must sustain thro' his death. As he acts up to the dictates of reason, he values life on its own account, he looks upon it as the sum of all other blessings, and therefore must never part with it, without an equivalent to himself or his country. He looks upon life as bestowed on him by the Almighty Being in trust for his own happiness, and that of the system of which he is a part; and therefore like a true soldier, he obeys order, and dares not leave his post, or sally out without the order of him who has a right to command him. Has he courage, he uses it in defence of his life when unjustly attacked; in defence of his property, his liberty, his family, and his country; these are the only stakes, against which he dare oppose his life, and thus his courage is real, as
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the motives are rational, honest, and virtuous. Does he receive an injury which the laws of his country have not taken notice of as a crime, he has courage to forgive it, in spite of mode or custom. He either has given proof of his courage in the great cause which requires it, or he is conscious to himself that he is ready to do so the first opportunity, and by that is enabled to laugh at the false imputation of cowardice by the uninking; which to be able to do, requires more true courage, and rational fortitude, than to fight twenty duels; for as I have observed, a man by habit, art, or the force of anger, may counterfeit real courage, so far as to expose his life in single combat; but none but the truly rational virtuous man of honour can have the courage to withstand the imputation of cowardice, objected by the unthinking many, by the prejudice of fashion and education. But if one or two worthy men would, out of compassion to their country, resolve to discountenance this remain of gothic barbarism, the mob, who only think as they are taught by their betters, would soon learn the true notion of honour, and that it consists in doing nothing in itself base, unjust, mean, or ridiculous; and that true
courage

courage and duelling, are no way akin to one another, and that an honest man must not risk his life, but in defence of his person, his liberty and his country; and exercises the highest act of courage when he forgives an injury, and scorns an impudent affront, when he refrains taking revenge, though he has it in his power, and declines being his own judge, least passion or prejudice should sway his verdict: He dares not rush into the next world without the divine summons, not only on his own account, but out of charity to his enemy; he dares not venture to send him to eternity loaded with sin, and passion, without a possibility of repentance: He looks upon himself as necessary not only to his death, but to those everlasting sufferings which he braves, and must feel without the interposition of divine mercy.

I remember the first duel I fought. though I believe I had as much natural courage as any man, yet it was with difficulty I could put a good face on the matter; and if it had not been shame, and the fear of ignominy, which withheld me, the fear of death and judgment, which I thought of with all their terrors, would certainly have got the better of my assumed courage; but as I came off without death

death that bout, every other duel became less dreadful to me; but still in all of them, in spite of me, my reason and conscience upbraided me with my folly and impiety, to which I was deaf; and I am of opinion, if all you young gentlemen, who boast of your prowess, would make the same sincere declaration, you would own frankly you condemn the custom in your hearts. If so, what should hinder you to join in banishing that barbarity out of your polite company? The first step to which should be, to order your footmen to kick out of all sober society, every man who had drawn his sword in defence of a drunken, or passionate quarrel, or the cause of some worthless prostitute; an instance or two of this kind of discipline would restore the youths of this age to their senses, and preserve the lives of many of his majesty's subjects.

I am, GENTLEMEN,

Yours &c.

JACK WILDAIR.

A

Third LETTER.

GENTLEMEN,

IN the two preceeding letters I only animadverted on such of your pleasures as are in themselves immoral ; and offered such Arguments, to persuade you to relinquish, at least, the excess of them, as I hope will have some weight with you, and in hopes that I have succeeded so far ; I beg leave to go one step farther and examine, if or not, that part of your time, which is employed in pleasures less vicious, is spent as it ought, or consistent with the dignity of men of sense, integrity,

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grity, and conscience, or with the claim, which you all pretend to have to the character of the fine gentleman, or even your pretensions to the use of reason, and the appearance of rational creatures.

In this enquiry, *Gentlemen*, I shall still proceed upon those principles, which seem to actuate every individual of you; and shall not pretend to deny the pursuit of pleasure to be a rational employment, for men of your age, rank, and figure: I shall allow that argument its full force; but I must take the liberty to be a little scrupulous how I admit, that great part of your most innocent amusements are capable of affording real pleasure, or satisfaction, to a mind, which has the use of all its reasoning powers and faculties.

When *Dick Modish* gets up about ten o'clock in a morning, has got dressed about twelve, and calls for his chariot to go to breakfast at *Ranelagh*, he certainly thinks he passes the day, in a great excess of pleasure, mirth, and innocence, and expects to do the same every day of his life; but ask this fine gentleman, what pleasure he has enjoyed? what it is that has given him so much satisfaction? or what are the particular blessings which he enjoys in such com-
pany.

pany, and in such diversions? he is entirely at a loss; he can tell you he was pleased, highly diverted, and all that, but for his life cannot recapitulate one circumstance, that in a rehearsal, can convey the most distant idea of pleasure to any but a mind just constituted as his is, and who by nature or custom has acquired a habit of being pleased with trifles, and amused with something beneath the most childish amusements of the nursery.

I called on *Dick* some days ago, when he was just dressed to go out upon his tour of pleasure; I had some business of consequence to transact with him, and thought the morning the properest time to enter upon it. He knew it, and tho' it chiefly concerned himself, yet I saw a visible chagreen in his countenance when I entered the room, as much as if he had said, Now am I disappointed from going abroad, and must be plagued with damned business for an hour or two; How shall I get rid of him? How shall I put it off till some bad day makes my staying at home necessary as well as tolerable? I saw this, and knew his mind as well as if he had expressed himself in these very words, and so anticipated his excuses, and endeavoured to banter him into a humour of entering seriously upon

the Affair. Why *Dick*, says I, you are early dressed, sure I hope nothing of greater moment than what I am come about, calls you abroad this forenoon, I hope you run no risk of losing your mistress by staying at home an hour or two, or are you engaged behind *Montague* house at this hour, that you seem so out of humour at the sight of your friend, lest he should prevent your being run through the guts, or your head being made a button of, to give a holiday to the city 'prentices; pray tell me now, what you would give to get rid of me but for this afternoon. Egad! replied *Dick*, I would give a great deal, for to be plain with you, I have made an appointment with some persons of quality to breakfast with them at *Ranelagh*, and to pass the day in an innocent frolic; I promise myself a great deal of pleasure, and would not lose the opportunity for the price of the best gelding I have in my stable; for I was with the same company on Wednesday last, and never past four and twenty hours so agreeably in my life: Well, my friend, replied I, you know what you suffer by the delay of this affair, and the danger you run of a disappointment; if you are contented to put it off till to-morrow,

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I shall consent, but it is upon this express condition, that you give me an exact journal of what passed at your last tour of pleasure, of which you speak with such rapture, and which sets you so much agog to renew it again; I know there can be no secrets in it, therefore you can have no objection to this request. 'Fore Gad, says *Dick*, I agree to the proposal with all my heart; but least I lose time in the narration, you must go with me to *Ranelagh*, and as we go along I will satisfy your Curiosity; you may order your chariot to follow, to carry you back, for I must go with my company, where I know such a queer fellow as you are grown, will not be very acceptable. I took him at his Word; we immediately set out, and *Dick* began the journal of his Wednesday's tour of pleasure. I got up, says he, about ten, was dressed by eleven, called on beau *Flutter* in *Spring Gardens*, and arrived at *Ranelagh* about twelve, where we met with lord *Dapperwit*, Mr. *Lofty*, *Bob Wouldberwit*, lady *Betty Ramble*, Miss *Fanny Pert*, and the good old lady her mother, Miss *Rompish*, and her cousin Miss *Polly Ogle*; we breakfasted together, and was the best company in the World: Lord *Dapperwit* was so roasted by lady *Betty*,

you would have split your sides to see the silly figure the peer made ; but he is a good-natured soul, took nothing amiss that was said, but all in good part, and bore the brunt of the railery of the whole company with the most philosophic disposition. Beau *Flutter* and Miss *Rompish* played a thousand roguish tricks to one another, and were pure company. *Bob* made his remarks upon all the ladies and gentlemen in the garden, and so pleased the old lady *Pert* with the secret history, intrigues, miscarriages, and follies of all that were not of our society, that I am sure the old widow is supplied with a fund of scandal for a month to come. This *Jack*, with drinking tea, and listening to the music, which was ravishing, was the chief of our entertainment at this delightful place, where you may hear and see much such another scene to day, if your solemn gravity can be persuaded to stay.

We left the gardens about two, and stopped at St. *James's* park, where we walked the mall for a couple of hours, continuing our remarks on all we saw, and laughing most egregiously at the many odd figures we saw huddled together in that place. Between three and four we went home to lady *Pert's*, where
we

we were elegantly entertained at dinner, romped an hour or two after, drank tea, and set out for *Vaux-hall*, after ordering our masquerade habits to be sent to Miss *Ogle's* at *Chelsea*, where we proposed to return at night. I need not tell you how we passed our time at that charming place, we took two or three rounds, gathered fresh matter of discourse from the odd medley of persons and characters which appeared there, admired the improvements on the lights, heard two or three songs, took a small repast, and returned by water about ten o' clock to *Chelsea*, hurried to Miss *Ogle's*, put ourselves in masquerade, and indulged ourselves in all the frolics we could think of. About four o' clock the maggot bit us to take boat and a band of musick, with which we went up the river a great way, and passed the time very merrily, till towards nine o' clock, when we went to *Richmond*, breakfasted, danced country dances in our habits, made a fool of all the company under the sanction of our disguise, and at last, quite tired with ravishing pleasure, we returned by water to *Chelsea*, shifted our dress, and separated each to his own home.

Now *Jack*, for as old as you are, would not you like such a frolic two or

three times a week, in such polite company? We had no drinking to excess, no gross intriguing, but all was innocent mirth and pastime, such as we cannot reproach ourselves for, at any stage of life, and which leaves no uneasy pangs upon the conscience, as does intemperance, and the immoderate pursuit of the pleasures resulting from the gratification of the meer appetite with Women and Wine : My old friend, continued *Dick*, are not you delighted with this new method we have found out in this age to pass away our time like gentlemen, and not like fots, and satyrs, as you bullies of the last century were wont to do ; why I warrant you, *Jack*, in the journal of any twenty four hours of your youthful days, we should have heard of how many flasks of burgundy were guzzled, how many boudy-houses were ransacked, how many duels were fought, and such like brutish, ungentleman-like doings as these; but for my part, though some of my acquaintance go into these oldfashion frolics, I have no constitution for them; I fear a clap as I do the plague, and I had rather see a decree against my estate, than a surgeon's bill : I shall never run that risk, but content myself with rational sober delight, such as I think no wise
man

man need be ashamed of. But pray, *Dick*, replied I, very gravely, do you always pass your time so agreeably? you have not *Ranelagh*, *Masquerades*, *Vauxhall*, &c. all the season, pray how do you pass such hours when this season is over? O much the same way, there is the drawing room, plays, operas, assemblies, ridottoes, and masquerades in winter; there is *Foot's* new invented diversion for the forenoon, there is *White's* to play at cards or talk politics, and there is visiting the ladies, and a thousand private parties of pleasure to amuse one at all seasons of the year; in short, *Jack*, no man has any occasion to be a rake for want of employment, or amusements to pass away his time agreeably, there are pleasures for every hour of the day. — But pray, *Dick*, you are no judge of musick, and I have heard you declare you did not know the difference between a solo and concerto, and that you could be as well pleased with a *Lancashire* hornpipe, as the best composition of *Correlli's*; how comes it about then, that you are of late so ravished with operas and other musical entertainments. --- There now, is the effect of your want of knowledge of life; when I go to *Ranelagh*, &c. do you think it is to hear the

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scrapers

scrapers in the Ochestre, by no means ; I would as soon ride a mile in rainy weather to hear a scotch bag-pipe, I never mind the fellows, I am delighted with the company, the conversation, the gay free air of the place, and manners of the people, and not with meer sound : Even the play I never mind it, though I go as constantly as any man in *England* ; I see the actors, and am pleased or displeased with them just as the humour takes me, or as it is the fashion for the time, but do you think I am not more delighted with the observations I make, and hear made upon the company, than with what a dull poet can say, which I have heard an hundred times over, and makes no more impressi^on on me than the pious lectures of a country parson, against the sin which I know he practises in private. In short, *Jack*, I will tell you a secret, which, fifty to one, if you are not to learn, though you have been in the world since my father was a boy ; that is, that the way for a man to be happy is to be pleased or displeased with what he pleases ; I know you would have man be pleased by certain pre-established rules, but I am pleased because it is my humour to be so, and a fig for all your grave rules ; what signifies the
knowledge

knowledge of them to me, unless they have force and efficacy enough to please me whether I will or not. But *Jack*, we are now got to *Ranelagh*, pray when you go into the gardens be pleased to lay aside that grave philosophic phiz of yours, you look as wise as the picture of *Solomon's* judgment, on an old piece of tapestry; look gay and free like the inhabitants of the place, and be pleased to be satisfied with yourself, and you must certainly relish this innocent amusement.

I cannot say my friend's discourse put me in a disposition to assume the gay air he wanted I should; on the contrary it confirmed the solemn gravity of my phiz, which for fear he and his merry companions should be as free with, as he had been, I was resolved to withdraw from that scene of impertinence and folly, and so returned home, heartily vexed, to see so much natural good sense, as *Dick* was possessed of, buried in a round of thoughtless amusements.

I am far, *Gentlemen*, from alledging that the scheme of people of fashion meeting together in a fine summer's morning, and breakfasting in public, is in itself irrational, or incapable of affording a reasonable relaxation to a thinking man; but I am concerned to see going

there made a business of, and preferred to the most important duties of private and public life; and that when people of sense and fashion meet on such occasions, there is so little of the rational in their conversation. There is my lady *Fashion* neglects the domestic affairs of her family, and leaves them to the management of careless servants, in order to be every morning at a place where her person and behaviour are the jest of the whole company, and where she can have no real delight, since, like my friend *Dick*, she has no taste for music, but she has a strong appetite for scandal, which she sucks in with greater appetite than her tea or chocolate. If the idle folly was confined to her own person, it might be tolerated; she is arrived at the age of dotage, and that may excuse her, but then she brings up the young ladies, her daughters, in the same idle, gadding, gossiping dispositions, and is teaching them to mind the affairs of their families, if any man is such a fool as to make them mistress of one, just as she minds her's. Thus folly and vanity become hereditary, and in a little time, when vanity has possessed the whole soul, Vice makes its entry with but small opposition.

But

But, *Gentlemen*, in this journal of *Jack's* tour of pleasure, which, like my picture and character in the first letter, may be inscribed to any man of you, what footsteps of rationality and polite education are to be traced! To what purpose does the fine young gentleman pass so many years at school, learning the dead languages, and so many more at the university to study philosophy and the sciences? To what purpose so much time and expence bestowed on travel into foreign countries? Is all this done, to improve the mind, enlarge the understanding, and give him a taste for pleasure above the vulgar part of mankind? Or is it to teach him to bury reason, sense, and understanding in a continued circle of empty trifles? Does he require the language of ancient *Greece* and *Rome*, to talk scandal fluently; or must he travel into *Italy* to romp and play monkey-tricks with a genteel air? Does it require understanding to go to an opera to hear musical dialogues, in a language of which he does not understand one title, and musick with which he is no more affected than with the sound of marrow-bones and clevers; or to go to a play not to see one acted, but to gape, stare, and gaze upon the audience, and
whisper

whisper to one another their ridiculous remarks; sure it can require but a small degree of understanding, and very little expence to qualify a gentleman for this method of life, and yet it is to these purposes, all the great talents, the great learning, profound wisdom and erudition of all the young nobility of *Great Britain*, are applied.

Were you now and then to relax from more rational pleasure, and trifle away an hour or two in such silly amusements, it would be tolerable, but to spend a whole life, and neglect every serious concern for such follies, and never once in an age call in your understandings to administer to your satisfactions, argues minds totally immersed in luxury, vanity, and thoughtlessness; let one of you, when he awakes in the morning, ask himself, — How have I spent the preceding day? What use have I made of my talents? Have they been employed for the benefit of my family, my king, or my country? What good have I done, which can give me pleasure in the reflection? Or what real rational pleasure have I enjoyed? Were the diversions, in which I was all day long plunged, becoming a man of understanding? Did they serve to enlarge my knowledge, increase humanity, or cherish

cherish health and vigour, in either body or mind? I am afraid, my friend *Dick Modish*, and all his brethren, must answer such questions in the negative, and acknowledge that they have been at best but negatively virtuous : It is true they may flatter themselves they have not been vastly immoral ; because they have shunned the excess of those vices we have been reprehending in the preceding letters ; but that is not sufficient to entitle them to humanity, unless they have used moderation in every other pursuit, and in all their amusements distinguished themselves as thinking beings. We despise the amusements of children, because they betray small symptoms of thought or understanding ; but what is the difference between a parcel of boys playing at marbles, or blind-man's-buff, questions and commands, or the like, and a parcel of old boys trifling with one another at *Ranelagh*, playing at romps at a masquerade, or sauntering at a play-house, or an opera, without attending to, or perhaps understanding the music, or the moral of the drama? Is the understanding more employed in the one class of diversions, than the other? No, and the scandal is the greater, because the children

dren exert in their little amusements all the talents they are masters of; whereas the grown-up masters and misses do all in their power to banish the very appearance of thought and reason from all their entertainments, and whenever the smallest glimpse of rationality creeps into their discourse, it is only to shew the world to what base purpose it can be employed, since it is used only to laugh at modesty, to shock the innocent with silly railery, and ridicule the absent with malicious slander.

In the name of God! if you must live at these places, allow thought to mingle with your diversions, and shew the world that a gentleman can amuse himself in a manner becoming a rational creature. I would not pretend to say that diversions are not necessary to relax the mind from more abstracted studies, but then it is needless that this relaxation should be carried so far, as to banish thought and knowledge entirely, and to introduce in its place, a senseless inactivity and childish rompishness; something becoming men may still mingle in conversation, without overcharging the spirits with too much thought; you may always find discourse, which may improve one

an-

another in the sentiments of virtue, benevolence and humanity, without abating an ace of the gaiety of your dispositions, or being obliged to scandal and ill-natur'd slander, to fill up the vacant spaces of a polite conversation.

But, if you consider, not only the ridiculous figure you make in these thoughtless tours of pleasure, but the scandalous abuse of time the excess of them necessarily occasions, you cannot, if you think at all, but be ashamed of them. To see a man, who pretends honour, neglect the concerns of his friends, the most weighty affairs of the publick, and his own domestic interest, to go and trifle away a whole day in a total absence of thought, at some or other of the places of public resort, has not only something vastly ridiculous, but something really vicious; for it is not enough, that we do not abuse our time with unnatural debauches, but we are obliged, in conscience and honour, to employ it to such purposes as the Great Giver of life intended it : It is impossible that a man can think he was born with reason and understanding, and endued with all the great advantages of acquired knowledge, meerly to please himself with sauntering from
one

one place of diversion to another, supposing these diversions never so rational. He must acknowledge his country has a right to part of his time, and the best of his talents; that the interest of his particular friends and neighbours, have a natural claim to some hours in the twenty four; and that the interest of his children and posterity lays an obligation upon him, with which he cannot honestly dispense, to bestow some time in the management and direction of his domestic concerns, and that the interest of his soul puts in a claim for a small share of his time being employed in religion, and acts of devotion and piety; I say, an honest thinking man must acknowledge he lies under all these obligations, and that he has no right to employ one hour in diversion, that may interfere with any of these great duties. Now what shall we say to such, who, for the sake of diversions, wherein there is not the smallest degree of thought required, make light of all these ties, neglect most of them, and perform the rest superficially and with reluctance?

I have known a game of cards lose a national vote, a party of pleasure has been preferred to the peace and fortune
of

of the nearest friends, and for domestic business there is not one in ten of the diversion-hunters who knows the state of his affairs, till by the knavery or negligence of the servants, to whom they have been entrusted, they are become desperate; it is not they themselves who suffer most, on such occasions, but a thousand innocent families are involved in their ruin. Nor shall I be so ill-natured as to believe they intended any should suffer by them, but they are so much plunged in pleasure, they have not leisure to consider the expence, nor the consequence of looking early into the state of their families.

This is the certain consequence of those expensive diversions, and how an honest man can reconcile it to his notions of honesty, is indeed to me the greatest of all mysteries.

But then, *Gentlemen*, you are to consider the influence your example has upon the industrious part of your fellow-subjects; laziness, vanity, and luxury, have already, by your means, crept into all the classes of life. The native strength and riches of the island may support a face of plenty for a little time longer, but while you continue to spend more time and money than you ought, and the rest
of

of the community, who supply your vanity, live higher than their income, poverty must soon be upon us, and then you must retrench out of necessity, and with a very bad grace; therefore out of a regard to pleasure, and out of policy to preserve the means of it, you ought to abate somewhat of the present excess, that you may have some hope that it may last always; which, as matters go at present, it is impossible it should. In a word, I would have you mingle some small share of understanding in all your entertainments, and make a more natural division of your time; let business, public and private, have its proportion; allow a moment or two in the twenty four hours for religious reflection, and perhaps that of itself may convince you, that you may relish more pleasure from six hours spent in a rational amusement, than you do now that you spend the whole twenty four in a thoughtless round of vanity and folly.

I am, GENTLEMEN,

Your real Friend,

And humble Servant,

J. WILDAIR.

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